

47 Ronin fails to excite

 By [Charles Siboto](#)

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From the outset of this review, you need to know that this is a terrible movie. Save yourself some money and just wait for it on DVD. Even then do not buy it, just hire it from the video store. Look, we can't really have high expectations of a movie starring Keanu Reeves. He seems to be the guy directors call when they want to take really good stories like the Constantine comic books and turn them into movies people don't really know how to react to. I mean, Reeves was even weird as Neo in *The Matrix*; he is just a strange actor.

I digress though; let's just get back into why *47 Ronin* is 118 minutes (Nu Metro's and Ster-Kinekor's ridiculous amount of trailers and ads aside) of your precious life given to a ridiculous venture.



The problem with this movie, strangely enough, is that it tries too hard to sell its weak plot to you and it tries to make you care about its shallow characters. I have no problem with the lack of a solid plot or weak character development in a movie about a fictionalised feudal Japan inhabited by honourable Samurai, witches, demons and other shady characters. In fact, both those weaknesses usually make such a venture much better because you expect it to be cheesy and crammed to bursting with well-choreographed fight scenes accompanied by mind-bending CGI.

47 Ronin doesn't do this! There are only a handful of fight sequences and they are pretty much average and the CGI, though quite good, is not that great or rather it isn't used that effectively. Director, Carl Erik Rinsch tried to tell the story of the real *47 Ronin* and make it very fantastical at the same time and failed on both counts. This movie, then, does not reward the viewer in any way other than it being very pretty. The scenery takes your breath away and the costumes the characters wear are amazing.



The story centres on Lord Asono's kingdom of Ako preparing to host a tournament in honour of a visit from the Shogun, the ruler of all of Japan. His beautiful daughter, Miko is in charge of all the ceremonial preparations and we learn that she is in love with Keanu Reeves' character, the half-breed, Kai. He is an outcast because he is half Japanese and half British and was raised by the demons of the forest, the Tengu and was trained by them to fight and also learned some of their magical

abilities, which he uses only once in the movie. He was adopted by Lord Asona but can never be a Samurai and everyone in the kingdom pretty much hates him. So much so that he lives in a hut in the outskirts of the kingdom. He is continuously beaten and humiliated throughout the movie for trying to help everyone.

Oishi, the leader of the Samurai and later the 47 Ronin is the main protagonist even though he is dumb enough not to believe Kai when he warns them of the witch, Mizuki. Oishi is your usual honourable-to-the-death type of guy - a lot like Ned Stark from Game of Thrones. Lord Kira, ruler of the neighbouring kingdom, Nagato is the villain of the piece. He is your usual power hungry megalomaniac who seeks to rule all of Japan. He is a decent villain but his companion, Mizuki is the one that truly steals the show. She oozes sexy creepiness as a witch. What follows is a story of deception and revenge by 47 guys you really don't care about.

Another thing that irked me is the misleading posters of the movie, mainly the heavily tattooed pirate guy displayed on all the material as the Renegade. He looks cool and you think he's a prominent character till you find out he's in the movie for less than five minutes. What the hell, man?

To conclude, this is a very bad movie. It is deadly dull and in no way captures the spirit of the real-life 47 Ronin who set out to avenge their master in 18th-century Japan. It has some interesting moments and in the few instances when the action kicks in it is done rather well but leaves you hungry for more. The story tries to engage you but doesn't get it right. Save yourself some time and money and give this one a miss.

ABOUT CHARLES SIBOTO

Charles Siboto is a delightful, youngish person. He firmly believes that kindness matters and cannot abide people who are asshats.

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